

REMARKS

The Final Office Action mailed April 16, 2007, has been received and reviewed. Claims 1 through 13, 49, 50, 52 through 69, 91 and 93 through 130 are currently pending in the application. Claims 5, 10 through 12, 56, 61, 64 through 68, 93 through 98 and 100 are withdrawn from consideration as being drawn to a non-elected invention. Claims 49, 50, 54, 55, 57 through 60, 62, 63, 69, 91, 99 and 114 through 130 are allowed. Claims 1 through 4, 6 through 8, 12, 13, 101, 103, 104 and 108 through 112 stand rejected. Claims 9, 105 through 107 and 113 have been objected to as being dependent upon rejected base claims, but the indication of allowable subject matter in such claims is noted with appreciation.

Applicants propose to amend claims 1, 101, 109 and 115, cancel claims 5, 7 through 12, 105 and 113, and respectfully request reconsideration of the application as proposed to be amended herein.

Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement

Please note that a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement was filed herein on January 18, 2007, and that no copy of the PTO/SB/08A was returned with the outstanding Office Action. Applicants respectfully request that the information cited on the PTO/SB/08A be made of record herein. It is respectfully requested that an initialed copy of the PTO/SB/08A evidencing consideration of the cited references be returned to the undersigned attorney.

35 U.S.C. § 102(b) Anticipation Rejections

Anticipation Rejection Based on U.S. Patent No. 5,050,892 to Kawai et al.

Claims 1 through 3 and 6 through 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kawai et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,050,892). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, as hereinafter set forth.

Claim 1 is proposed to be amended herein to include the subject matter previously set forth in claim 9 and intervening claims (i.e., prior to the cancellation of such claims herein), which subject matter was indicated by the Examiner as being allowable.

Applicants, therefore, submit that claim 1 is in condition for allowance. Applicants

further submit that claims 2, 3 and 6 through 8 are also in condition for allowance at least by virtue of their dependency from an allowable base claim.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of claims 1 through 3 and 6 through 8.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Obviousness Rejections

Obviousness Rejection Based on U.S. Patent No. 5,050,892 to Kawai et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. RE 31,005 to Prasse et al.

Claims 4, 13, 101 through 104 and 108 through 112 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawai et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,050,892) in view of Prasse et al. (U.S. Patent No. RE 31,005). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, as hereinafter set forth.

Claim 4

Claim 4 depends from independent claim 1. As set forth hereinabove, Applicants propose to amend claim 1 to include subject matter indicated by the Examiner as being allowable. Applicants, therefore, submit that claim 4 is also in condition for allowance at least by virtue of its dependency from an allowable base claim.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of claim 4.

Claims 101 through 104 and 108

Independent claim 101 is proposed to be amended herein to include subject matter previously set forth in dependent claim 105 (i.e., prior to its cancellation herein), which subject matter was indicated as being allowable by the Examiner.

Applicants, therefore, submit that claim 101 is clearly in condition for allowance. Applicants further submit that claims 102 through 104 and 108 are also allowable at least by virtue of their dependency from an allowable base claim.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of claims 101 through 104 and 108.

Claims 109 through 112

Independent claim 109 is proposed to be amended herein to include subject matter previously set forth in dependent claim 113 (i.e., prior to its cancellation herein), which subject matter was indicated as being allowable by the Examiner.

Applicants, therefore, submit that claim 109 is clearly in condition for allowance. Applicants further submit that claims 110 through 112 are also allowable at least by virtue of their dependency from an allowable base claim.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of claims 109 through 112.

Objections to Claims 9, 105 through 107 and 113/Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 9, 105 through 107 and 113 stand objected to as being dependent upon rejected base claims, but are indicated to contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if placed in appropriate independent form.

As previously set forth, independent claim 1 is proposed to be amended herein to include the allowable subject matter of dependent claim 9 and intervening claims. Likewise, independent claim 101 is proposed to be amended herein to include the allowable subject matter of dependent claim 105. Further, independent claim 109 is proposed to be amended to include the allowable subject matter of dependent claim 113.

Claims 9, 105 and 113 are proposed to be cancelled herein.

Rejoinder

Upon allowance of independent claim 49 rejoinder and allowance of claims 56, 61, and 64 through 68, which depend directly or indirectly therefrom, is respectfully requested as allowed by M.P.E.P. § 821.04(a). Likewise, upon allowance of independent claim 91 rejoinder and allowance of claims 93, 94, 97, 98 and 100, which depend directly or indirectly therefrom, is respectfully requested.

ENTRY OF AMENDMENTS

The proposed amendments to claims 1, 101, 109 and 115 above should be entered by the Examiner because the amendments are supported by the as-filed specification and drawings and do not add any new matter to the application. Further, the amendments do not raise new issues or require a further search.

Applicants note that the amendment to claim 15 corrects a spelling error.

Finally, if the Examiner determines that the amendments do not place the application in condition for allowance, entry is respectfully requested upon filing of a Notice of Appeal herein.

CONCLUSION

Claims 1 through 3, 6, 13, 49, 50, 54 through 69, 91, 93, 94, 97 through 104, 106 through 112 and 114 through 130 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and an early notice thereof is respectfully solicited. Should the Examiner determine that additional issues remain which might be resolved by a telephone conference, he is respectfully invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



Bradley B. Jensen
Registration No. 46,801
Attorney for Applicants
TRASKBRITT
P.O. Box 2550
Salt Lake City, Utah 84110-2550
Telephone: 801-532-1922

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